percent duty from 01.04.2008. Refined, Bleached and Deodorised (RBD) Palmolein and Palm oil are allowed for import at 7.5% duty. The import of Palm oil and Palmolein is allowed at 'Zero' duty to meet the gap between demand and supply of edible oils in the country and to ensure availability of edible oil at reasonable prices to the consumers.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The Government of Kerala has requested the Government of India on 25th of June 2009 to reimpose import duty on ' Palm oil. However, in order to keep the domestic edible oil prices at affordable levels and within reach of the common man, at present there is no proposal to increase import duty on Palmolein and Palm oil.

Dilution upto 25 per cent in use of jute bags

*173. SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is allowing a dilution of upto 25 per cent in the use of jute bags for packaging foodgrains meant for Government procurement;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) how it would protect the environment?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) to (c) Government is mandated to provide reservation of products for compulsory packaging in jute under the Jute Packaging Material (Compulsory use in Packaging Commodity) Act, 1987 (JPM Act). Under the said Act, Government has been specifying the products and percentage for compulsory packaging in jute separately for each year, considering the recommendations of Standing Advisory Committee (SAC), constituted under the JPM Act. SAC looks into all the relevant issues like availability of raw jute, capacity of jute industry, the likely demand and other such issues before making a recommendation. Proposal for deciding the products and percentage of reservation for compulsory packaging in jute for the jute year 2009-10 (July-June) is under consideration.

Whenever there is shortage of supply of jute bags, Ministry resorts to providing exemptions from the reservation in order to meet the demand of packaging material.

The Government considers the use of Jute as environmentally friendly because it is biodegradable, reusable and environmentally sustainable. Therefore, providing for compulsory packaging of certain products in jute protects the environment.

Recommendations of Prabhu Committee on Commodity Boards

*174. DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN:

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what were the findings and recommendations of the Prabhu Committee that was set up to look into the performance of Commodity Boards;

(b) whether Government has taken a final view on the recommendations;

(c) if so, which are the recommendations accepted and which recommendations have not been accepted so far and why; and

(d) what is the status of implementation of the Committee's recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ANAND SHARMA) : (a) to (c) The one-man committee headed by Shri P.P. Prabhu that was set up to look into the performance of Commodity Boards made 199 recommendations which broadly cover rationalization and reformulation of existing schemes, promotion of interest of the small growers, reduction in membership and manpower of the Boards, enhancing of financial powers, strengthening of research activities with periodical evaluation, privatization of domestic sales outlets, withdrawing from the control activities, etc. The Government after examination accepted 128 recommendations. 36 recommendations were not accepted, as they were not found to be feasible and practicable. No action was required in respect of 8 recommendations, which were of advisory nature. Final view on 27 recommendations was not taken pending further examination.

(d) Directions have been issued by the Government to the respective Commodity Boards to implement the accepted recommendations.

Increasing road accidents in the country

†*175. SHRI BRIJ BHUSHAN TIWARI:
SHRI BHAGWATI SINGH:

Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that road accidents are increasing day by day in country which has led the country to top the list of road accident deaths in the world;

(b) if so, whether Government is working on any effective plan to protect lacs of people from such untimely deaths every year; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (c) It is true that road accidents are increasing in the country. However, in terms of road accident deaths per one lakh population, India (10.1) is better than many of the developed and developing countries like USA (14.66), Russian Federation (22.95) and South Africa (32.53). The Government has taken several actions to improve the road safety, the details of which are given in the Statement.

Statement

Increasing road accidents in the country

(a) The number of road accidents, fatal road accidents and the number of persons killed in India during the years 2003-2007 (the latest available data) is as under:

Year	Number of Accidents		Number of Persons
	Total	Fatal	Killed
1	2	3	4
2003	406726	73589	85998
2004	429910	79357	92618

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.